

Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Reference Group Terms of Reference

Adopted 21 February 2023

1. Purpose

The Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Reference Group (the Group) will advise Greater Shepparton City Council (Council) on the application and implementation of the *Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Strategy: Houses for People 2020*, in pursuit of the vision that 'all members of the Greater Shepparton community have access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing'.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of the Group, 'Affordable Housing' is defined by the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* as 'housing, including Social Housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low and moderate income households'. The applicable income ranges in respect to Affordable Housing that is not Social Housing are as specified by a Governor in Council Order under Section 3AB of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, as released on 1 July of each year.

'Social Housing' is defined by Section 4(1) of the Housing Act 1983, with income limits for eligibility as determined by the Director of Housing.

3. Role of the Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Reference Group

The Group is appointed in an advisory capacity to Council. It has no executive authority and will operate in accordance with these Terms of Reference:

- a. to provide advice to Council on matters and issues relating to Affordable Housing within the Municipality;
- b. to make recommendations to Council to promote and support delivery of Affordable Housing;
- c. to assist Council to undertake relevant research, identify sites suitable for Affordable Housing, facilitate targeted responses to identified vulnerable cohorts, and conduct any other strategic level work required by Council;
- d. to assist Council in sourcing external funding opportunities to further Affordable Housing;
- e. to promote a collaborative and communicative approach between agencies, individuals, companies and Council, to identify possibilities for innovation, and maximise efficient use of resources;
- f. to provide advice and recommendations to Council on policy matters relating to Affordable Housing, including but not limited to, the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme; and
- g. to promote understanding and awareness of matters and issues relating to Affordable Housing within the Municipality.

3.1 Additional functions

To further its role, the Group may provide:

- a. a collaborative network;
- b. recommendations to Council regarding meetings, forums, seminars or other activities as may be deemed of value by the Group to meet or assist in meeting its objectives;
- c. collaboration with Council to organise such meetings, forums, seminars or other activities as may be deemed of value by the Group, within the designated scope of the Group; and
- d. advocacy on Affordable Housing matters within the Municipality and to Council.

The Group does not act as an internal referral body to assess/comment upon planning permit applications. This stipulation does not limit or prevent individual members of the Group from making submissions, objections or appeals to current applications or proposals being assessed by Council.

4. Group Membership

- a. The membership of the Group shall comprise the following:
 - i. one (1) Councillor (voting member). A second councillor may also be appointed to the Group (non-voting member);
 - ii. one (1) voting member from each of the following 12 member organisations (more than one member from each organisation is welcome to attend the Group meetings but only one member has a vote);
 - BeyondHousing
 - Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
 - Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District Inc.
 - Greater Shepparton Foundation
 - Primary Care Connect
 - Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative
 - Shepparton Chamber of Commerce
 - The Bridge Youth Services
 - The Committee for Greater Shepparton
 - The Salvation Army
 - VincentCare
 - Wintringham Housing Limited
 - iii. a maximum of four(4) voting representatives of the community who are unaffiliated with any of the organisations outlined above; and
 - iv. up to two (2) members of Council's Strategic Planning Team and one (1) member of Council's Community Strengthening Team, including a responsible Council officer to oversee the Group's function (non-voting Group members).

In addition to the members, Council will provide an administration support officer to support the Group as the need arises and within the scope of its role.

5. Nominations/applications to become a Group Member

Council will assess each nomination against the candidate's ability to provide complementary diversity to fulfil the Group's functions as outlined in the Group's Terms of Reference, as well as the following selection criteria:

- an awareness of, and an interest in, Affordable Housing in the Municipality, and a willingness to have an input into housing related issues;
- a commitment to support the provision of integrated and appropriate Affordable Housing sites within the Municipality;
- a knowledge of housing development processes and a willingness to acquire further knowledge;
- the ability to access networks and stakeholder groups;
- the ability to promote Affordable Housing outcomes within the Municipality; and

- experience relating to Affordable Housing provision, including Social Housing.

5.1. Organisational members

Each member organisation must resolve to nominate a representative to the Group. In the event that this representative is unable to attend a Group meeting, each organisation should nominate a second representative who can attend and vote at Group meetings in their absence.

Other formally constituted local agencies or interest groups that represent an interest in Affordable Housing are eligible to make an application to join the Group. Any such additional membership would follow an enabling amendment to the Terms of Reference.

5.2. Community Representatives

Council will call for applications from members of the community to sit on the Group as voting members for a two (2) year term. The Group is not obliged to nominate candidates to all community positions and will assess each nomination against the candidate's ability to provide complementary diversity to fulfil the Group's functions as outlined above.

The Group will advise Council of its recommendations for community positions. Should a vacancy occur within the appointed time frame, Council may call for nominations to appoint a replacement for the balance of the term.

6. Role of the Administration Support Officer and Responsible Council Officer

The administration support officer's role is to provide administrative support to the Group. This includes (but is not limited to) tasks such as minute keeping/distribution, agenda preparation and distribution, meeting purchasing/budgetary obligations, correspondence and record keeping.

The responsible Council officer provides advice and oversight to the Group on operational matters of Council and the Group. This includes financial decision making (within the officer's delegations), strategic advice on Council's processes and procedures and making formal recommendations to Council regarding the Group and the Group's recommendations to Council where appropriate.

7. Co-option

Community members or Council officers can apply to become a co-opted associate member for a specific sub-group, task or project, however this membership is time limited (see Appendix 1: Sub-group Guidelines). Co-opted associate members may attend Group meetings where required by their role in a sub-group, task or project, but have no voting rights in the Group.

- Co-option will require the completion of an application form.
- All co-option nominations/applications are to be ratified at a group meeting.
- The term of the co-option will be negotiated between the applicant, the relevant sub-group, and the responsible Council officer, dependent on the sub-group, task or project.
- A co-opted associate member may withdraw their co-opted membership at any time by notifying the responsible Council officer.

8. Sub-groups

Establishment and/or cessation of sub-groups may be directed from time to time by the Group or Council (see Appendix 1: Sub-group Guidelines).

- a. The Group forms sub-groups to work on particular projects as required.
- b. The focus of a sub-group must align with the Group's purpose and action plan.
- c. Sub-groups are required to provide a written progress update prior to the Group meeting to be attached to the agenda or as required.

9. Terms of appointment

- a. All members will be appointed for a two (2) year term and will commence on a designated common date determined by Council.
- b. The administration support officer will keep a record of all attendance and this will be attached to the agenda for every meeting to ensure members are aware of attendance.
- c. If a member is unable to attend, an apology should be provided to the administration support officer prior to the meeting.
- d. If a member does not attend a scheduled meeting of the Group for more than three consecutive meetings without submitting an apology, membership may be reviewed by the responsible Council officer:
 - i. when reviewing a membership, consideration of other factors such as participation on sub-groups or contributions to Group activities aside from official Group meetings may be considered; and
 - ii. any recommendation to revoke a member's appointment to the Group will be ratified by the Group prior to consideration at an Ordinary Council Meeting.
- e. A leave of absence can be requested for up to six months if a member feels they are unable to make it to a number of meetings due to particular circumstances. The request for a leave of absence will be sent to the responsible Council officer. The leave of absence will be agreed to by the responsible Council officer.
- f. At any time a Group Member who wishes to withdraw their membership can do so by way notifying the responsible Council officer in writing.

10. Group Meeting Procedure

Meetings of the Group shall be conducted in accordance with the following procedures:

- a. a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary will be elected by the Group for the duration of a one (1) year term, with eligibility for no more than three (3) consecutive terms:
 - i. In order to appoint a Chairperson, Group Members will self-nominate and indicate their willingness to undertake the role of Chairperson;
- b. if the Chairperson is not present at a Group meeting, the Deputy Chairperson must preside. Where the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are both absent the members must appoint a Chairperson for that meeting;
- c. the Chairperson will ask members present and entitled to vote (including the any councillor) to declare any conflicts of interest relating to items listed on the agenda;

- d. In the event that a member cannot attend a Group meeting, an apology must be received. Group members will be expected to demonstrate their commitment and due diligence by the preparation for, attendance at, and active participation in, Group meetings;
- e. the Group shall have a quorum which is equal to one-half plus one of the total number of voting Group members;
- f. the Group's position on any issue under consideration will be made upon a majority vote by members or, when determined by the Group, by proxy. In the event of an equal number of votes, the Chairperson shall have an additional casting vote. Motions cannot be carried if a quorum is not in attendance;
- g. when the Group's business involves matters in which one or more members have a conflict of interest, or when their presence may inhibit full discussion, those members should withdraw from this portion of the meeting;
- h. the Group shall meet at least once per two (2) month period, or as otherwise determined by the Group. The frequency of any sub-group meetings will be determined by the Chairperson of each sub-committee;
- i. the administration support officer shall give reasonable notice of all meetings by distributing a notice of the meeting to all members at least seven clear days prior to the meeting; and
- j. minutes shall be kept of the proceedings at all Group meetings:
 - i. copies of minutes must be kept on record by the administration support officer and distributed to the Group within 14 days of a meeting;
 - ii. minutes will be confirmed or corrected at the Group meeting immediately following. This confirmation/correction will be by way of a motion by one member and seconded by another, present and entitled to vote; and
 - iii. it is recommended that any meeting minutes briefly outline the content of each of the items listed on the agenda, including actions taken, and any recommendations.

Meeting structure, agenda and minute formats should meet the needs of the Group, while ensuring consistency, completeness and accountability.

10.1. Special Meetings

Council has the ability to call a special meeting in addition to the regular meetings on request from three or more of Group members or under Council instruction, if required.

11. Funding

Council allocates funding for the Group through the annual budget process. This funding is controlled by the responsible Council officer and can be spent on recommendations from the Group. Council officers are not obliged to act on the recommendations of the Group.

- a. Recommendations on the allocation of funds will be made by a motion of the Group supported by a majority vote. The recommendation will then be considered by the responsible Council officer and, if approved, will be processed.
- b. Council (on the Group's behalf) may enter into funding agreements or partnership agreements with other organisations. This may result in Council officers, under

delegation, agreeing to provide funding, or being able to apply for funding on behalf of the Group.

- i. All funding agreements and partnership agreements will need to be formalised with the creation of a Sponsorship Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding signed by the relevant delegated Council officer.
 - ii. Confirmation of all in-kind partnerships will need to be received in writing, through the responsible Council officer.
- c. The responsible Council officer will keep the Group informed of the available budget.

12. Reporting Procedure

Reporting of Group activities shall be conducted in accordance with the following procedures:

- a. the Councillor/s will provide Council with ad hoc briefings regarding the activities of the Group, as required;
- b. any issue on which the Group requests Council advice or information will be communicated through the responsible Council officer; and
- c. the responsible Council officer will provide an annual report to Council, which will include the following:
 - i. A brief description on the Group's activities/events held during the year, key achievements and budget acquittal;
 - ii. A report on membership status; and
 - iii. 12 month action plan.

13. Group Conduct Principles

Group members are expected to:

a. Group Conduct Principles:

- attend meetings on a regular basis, or provide an apology prior to the meeting;
- actively participate in Group discussions and offer their opinions and views;
- act with integrity, treat all persons with respect, listen to and consider opinions expressed by others without interrupting, and have due regard to the opinions, rights and responsibilities of others; and
- Council at any time may terminate the membership of any member of the Group if such a request is received from the Group.

b. Confidentiality

Group members are expected to maintain confidentiality in relation to any matters discussed in group or sub-group meetings that have been identified as being confidential.

c. Conflicts of Interest

Group members are encouraged to comply with the *Local Government Act 2020* with respect to any conflicts of interest. All Group meeting agendas must contain an item for consideration of conflicts of interest.

14. Dispute resolution

Should a dispute arise over any aspect of operations and participation in the Group, the member/s and Council will adopt the following procedures in an effort to negotiate a satisfactory resolution. The parties will attempt to resolve any issues of dispute.

In the event of a dispute between a member/s and Council:

- a. either party may give written notice to the other stating details of the matter in dispute and requesting that the parties meet to discuss and negotiate a mutually acceptable resolution. The parties meet in good faith within seven days of the serving of a notice of dispute under this agreement;
- b. if the dispute cannot be resolved within 28 days of the initial meeting the parties will refer the dispute to mediation and appoint a mediator, agreed to by both parties where possible. If the parties cannot agree on a mediator, then the matter will be referred to an appropriate mediation service in the Municipality. The parties must agree to equally share fees and costs associated with the mediation; and
- c. both parties must agree to abide by the final recommendation made by the appropriate mediation service.

15. Assemblies of Councillors

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, the definition of an Assembly of Councillors includes any meeting of an advisory Group of Council if at least one Councillor is present. Any Councillors in attendance at meetings of the Group are required to declare any conflicts of interest. Following the meeting, a Record of Assembly of Councillors must be completed stating:

- the names of all Councillors and members of Council staff in attendance;
- the matters considered;
- any conflicts of interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending; and
- whether the Councillor who has disclosed the conflict of interest leaves the assembly.

The Record of Assembly of Councillors must be submitted to Council in accordance with the *Assembly of Councillors Operational Procedure 37.PRO6* (Trim Ref: M13/51766) within seven days of the date of the Group meeting so that it can be included in the next available Ordinary Council Meeting agenda.

16. Review

The Terms of Reference for the Group will be reviewed on a biennial basis prior to the recruitment of community members, or at the direction of Council or the Group.

The Terms of Reference will be adopted by formal resolution of Council.

Appendix 1: Sub-group Guidelines

1. Membership

Sub-group membership will consist of interested Group members and co-opted associate members.

- a. There is no cap on the number of members of a sub-group.
- b. There must be at least one Group member on each sub-group, who is responsible for reporting on the sub-group's actions to the Group.
- c. The sub-group should appoint a chairperson, with the term of office dependent on the sub-group, and its task or project.
- d. Members will be appointed until the particular activity of the sub-group has been completed.
- e. Members may be appointed to consecutive and/or concurrent sub-groups.

2. Decision making within the sub-group

All decisions of the sub-group will be reached by general consensus of the sub-group members.

- a. All substantive decisions and recommendations need to be voted on by the Group.
- b. Where there is division and a consensus cannot be agreed, the matter is to be discussed with the responsible Council officer to progress appropriately.

3. Reporting Procedure

Reporting of the sub-group activities shall be conducted in accordance with the following procedures:

- a. A report/ update/ minutes of each meeting of the sub-group will be provided to the administration support officer for noting and record keeping;
- b. The Group can request copies of such minutes at any time by notifying the administration support officer; and
- c. The sub-group shall provide a brief report of the sub-group's activities for inclusion in the Annual Report.